

Subject: 60 Day Extensions for Exchange Visitors (in Five Categories) from Countries with Closed Borders

Date: May 29, 2020

Dear Sponsors:

The Department of State (Department) appreciates your continued efforts in addressing the health, safety, and welfare concerns of your exchange visitors during this challenging time. In order to help sponsors manage the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, this email contains important information regarding an optional one-time opportunity to seek a 60-day extension for exchange visitors in the Au pair, Intern, Summer Work Travel, and Trainee categories whose programs end between May 31 and July 31, 2020, and to allow the continuation of those programs if requested by sponsors until the safe repatriation of exchange visitors can be arranged.

Due to the extreme challenges that COVID-19 has presented for travel and other aspects of our exchanges, the Department wants to confirm to sponsors that it expects to look favorably upon sponsors' requests pursuant to 22 CFR § 62.43(c) to extend programs for 60-days beyond maximum duration for exchange visitors who are having difficulty returning home. Changing global health conditions and the reactions of various governments thereto have resulted in travel restrictions (e.g., closure of borders) that make it difficult, if not impossible, for exchange visitors from such countries to repatriate in a timely manner at the end of their exchange programs.

To pursue a 60-day extension beyond maximum duration under 22 CFR § 62.43(c), sponsors with exchange visitors under [in?] the Au pair, Intern, Summer Work Travel, Teacher, and Trainee categories must reassess the plausibility of returning to their home country once their program ends within the next two months. Once sponsors have identified exchange visitors that are unable to travel back to their home country, sponsors should submit requests for this one-time 60-day extension in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for all interested and eligible exchange visitors. Program end dates in these requests cannot be later than 60-days from their latest program end date. Sponsors should continue to monitor SEVIS records and apply for this 60-day extension prior to the exchange visitors' program end dates, if possible, and otherwise as soon as possible. Finally, sponsors must submit an extension justification for each exchange visitor to the Office of Designation mailbox for that category. Extension justifications must include a letter from the sponsor that details the reasons that justify the extension, and a completed "60-day extension request" Excel spreadsheet (see attachment). This spreadsheet requires the following information for each exchange visitor: (1) SEVIS identification number, (2) full name (last name, first name), (3) date of birth, (4) country of citizenship, (5) sponsor program number, (6) the requested program end date, and (7) Pay.gov receipt for the \$367 extension fee.

Once the Office of Designation has granted extension requests for one or more eligible exchange visitors, sponsors should reprint Forms DS-2019 for those exchange visitors whose programs are extended and provide the exchange visitors with updated and signed forms as soon as possible.

The Department is continuing to monitor closely the COVID-19 situation and its effect on the EVP. We will supplement this guidance with additional information and/or will adjust our guidance, as needed.

Once again, thank you for your work, patience, and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Sincerely,

Office of Private Sector Exchange